

GOD WORKS ADVERSITY FOR GOOD - Part 2 - Acts 22:25 – November 1st, 2009

- This is part two of a teaching titled; "God Works Adversity for Good." Paul is in a very difficult set of circumstances here in chapter 22.
- However, what we see here is how it is, and the way it is that God takes the adversity and works it out for Paul's good and God's glory.

1. In our pain and suffering (Verses 23-24)

- Paul's about to be flogged. This form of torture was so cruel inflicting such unspeakable pain and suffering one either confessed or died.
- This suffering isn't foreign to Paul. Not only is he no stranger to this, he actually anticipated this because the Lord had called him to this.

Acts 9:15-16 15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." NIV

Acts 14:21-23 21 They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, 22 strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. NIV

2. Through our legal rights (Verse 25)

- v25 Just as they're ready to whip him, Paul asks the centurion if it's legal for them to flog a Roman citizen who's not been found guilty.
- Paul knew his legal rights as a Roman citizen. As a citizen it was against the law to bind him and a capital offense to scourge him.
- This answers an often asked question about when and how far Christians should go in standing up for our legal rights under the law.

- First, it's important to know that as believers, we are never to sue other believers in the court of law. Consider Paul's letter to Corinth:

1 Corinthians 6:1-8 1 If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! 4 Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! 5 I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? 6 But instead, one brother goes to law against another-and this in front of unbelievers! 7 The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? 8 Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers. NIV

- Be that as it may, there may come a time when it is appropriate and necessary to exercise our legal rights when dealing with the world.
- This is what we see here with the Apostle Paul. As a Roman Citizen, he is dealing rightfully with the world in exercising his legal rights.
- Please don't misunderstand the lesson of the text here. This certainly doesn't give us license to start pursuing litigation and sue people.

As one commentator said it; "There are times for a believer to claim his civil rights. A believer should be willing to suffer for the cause of Christ, but there is no virtue in suffering merely for suffering's sake. Where protection of the law exists and can be invoked without compromise or complication, it can be invoked. A believer ought not to resort to the law for every petty offense, but in matters where the alternatives are serious and the means of legal redress exist, it is not wrong to seek protection of the law."